1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

It was only with the beginning of World War I that trade in powder and fire-arms was stopped. For more than a century Portuguese patriots and thinkers had been insisting upon the necessity for ending the export of man-power, so evidently impoverishing in its effects on the life of the colony.[1] Law succeeded law, and regulation followed regulation, but there was little real change.[2] With the Republic,[3] however, real changes began. Conditions were investigated,[4] and although complete and immediate reform could hardly have been expected, changes did begin. Provisions for manumission upon presentation to authority were made and carried out. Repatriation from island and mainland plantations began to be undertaken. This was the origin of small communities of Cokue and other 'Ngangela' people now living at various points in the Umbundu country. From the plantations they were repatriated to 'their places of origin', which were, however, not their own homes but the places whence they had been sold into servitude. Under various regulatory practices, contract labour has been continued down to the present day. The depression which came to Central Africa in 1930 reduced the demand to a minimum, and for a few years it did not represent a serious problem in the life of the Ovimbundu. There was a time of great activity in road building (approximately 1915–32) when the demands for labour were a serious problem to Umbundu life. Soon after the opening of World War II a strong demand for colonial products revived the industries of Angola and stimulated the creation of new ones. The consequent demand for labour and the means used to supply it have come to constitute the most severe trial which has yet come to the Ovimbundu. Their docility has made this service bear more hardly on them than on some other people of the colony. Their

[1] e.g. Saldanha da Gama, *Memoria*, 1814; Sá da Bandeira, 1839; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios* (1846), pp. xxxviii, 6 f., 44 f.; Casmiro, *Africa Nostra*, p. 60 f.

[2] The principal laws were promulgated as follows: 1836 (Formal abolition of the traffic); 1839 (Authorizing co-operation with the international naval squadron); 184[illegible]1841, 1845 (Supplementary ordinances); 1875 (Law of Liberation and regulation of contract labour); 1878, 1889 (Further regulations); 1899 (Dealing with 'corrective labour'); 1902, 1903 (Further regulation of recruitment).

[3] Proclaimed in Portugal, 5 Oct., 1910.

[4] A Commission came from Lisbon that same year and took testimony throughout the colony. For conditions just previous to the Republic, see Nevinson, op. cit.; C. A. Swan, *The Slavery of To-day* (1909); H. R. F. Bourne, *Slave Traffic in Portuguese Africa* (1908); W. A. Cadbury, *Labour in Portuguese West Africa* (2nd ed. 1910); C. Harding, *In Remotest Barotseland* (1905).

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

geographic position in the centre of the colony has also made it harder for them to evade it. Nevertheless, many have emigrated. In 1941 and again in 1944, when the writer visited South Africa, he found thousands of Ovimbundu on the Rand and many more in the Rhodesias and the Congo. Many are also known to have gone to the South-West Territory and to Bechuanaland, and some even to such distant points as Natal's north coast and French Equatorial Africa.[1]

Recent Developments

Currency, in the sense of money, is quite a recent introduction to the Ovimbundu. To the end of their trading activities, cloth ('trade goods') was the standard of exchange. Although dependence upon world markets caused prices to fluctuate with the course of the rubber trade, as we have seen, there was not, however, the great range which follows the fluctuations of the money market through a course of inflation and deflation. The Ovimbundu had had some dealings in money before the time of World War I, when there was a silver coinage, so that the depreciation which set in about 1921 was all the more confusing to them. This is not the place to discuss the finances and banking of Angola, but it must be noted that the conversion of the 'Escudo' into the 'Angolar' in 1928 at the rate of Ag. 0,80 to Esc. 1$00 greatly increased the sense of confusion among the natives. This was only to be expected when the native tax remained at Ag. 80,00 where it was Esc. 80,00 before, whereas daily wages to contract labourers became Ag. 0,80 where before they were Esc. 1$00. The confusion was considerable.[2]

Taxes began to be levied soon after military occupation, but for some years they were very small, especially in relation to opportunities for earning. When the head-tax reached Esc. 80,00 it remained at that figure for some years. In 1935 a 'work tax' and

[1] This state of affairs is frequently and quite freely commented upon in the Angola papers. For a recent notice see local correspondence entitled 'Notícias do Cuma' in the *Voz do Planalto* (Nova Lisboa) for 17 Aug. 1946. One of the most serious recent indictments is contained in an article in *O Farolim*, Luanda, 5 Nov. 1945, by Padre J. Alves Correia. This distinguished writer asserts that the present labour policy is "killing the goose which lays the golden egg".

[2] For finance, currency, banking, and economic conditions in general, see Department of Overseas Trade, *Economic Conditions in Angola*, H.M.S.O., 1929. There are also reports for 1923 and 1925, but the one for 1929 covers the previous decade.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu
Angola FP1

THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Men can go out to work in three ways. By going to look for work in a city or on a plantation, by being recruited in his village by a travelling labour recruiter (*angariador*), or by being recruited through the post for military service or for contract labour (a period of a year's non-voluntary work).

Men who are away at work may keep in touch with their kin by letters. These are sent to the nearest Catholic or Protestant mission station according to the religious sympathies of the sender and his kin and are sent from there to the villages.

Angola forms an Overseas Province of Portugal, and is therefore subject to the Overseas Ministry in Lisbon. The Overseas Provinces of Portugal are officially declared to be integral parts of Portugal, which is regarded as a nation existing in Europe, Africa, and Asia. The expression 'Here also is Portugal' is often heard in Angola.

The inhabitants of Angola are in legal status divided into 'civilized' persons, whether white, mulatto, or black, with Portuguese citizenship, and Portuguese 'natives' or 'uncivilized' persons,[1] this latter category including some 3,000 'uncivilized' mulattoes. The 1950 census gave Angola a total population of 4,145,266 of whom 135,355 were 'civilized'. This category was composed of 78,826 whites, 26,335 mulattoes, and 30,089 Africans, plus a balance of 105 presumably Goans.

The 'natives' are, unlike the 'civilized', subject to the Labour Code. There is no Native Legal Code, nor does Portuguese law apply to 'natives'. Administrative officers may apply Portuguese law, or native custom as known to them, or their own judgement.

The administration is headed by the Governor-General who resides at Luanda. The province of Angola is divided into districts each headed by a district governor. Both the governors-general and the district governors have usually distinguished themselves in the Services or in a legal career. Members of the administrative service are not usually promoted to these posts, although they may attain such positions as that of Secretary of Native Affairs.

The districts are in turn sub-divided into *concelhos* (a term

[1] By a law of 1961 Portuguese citizenship has been made universal.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

Cela, and Cela influences are notable in several ways.[24] In Cassongue Umbundu has relatively recently ousted other speech.[25] Geographically Bimbe generally is rather lower than most of the Highland. Although the railway line and the growth of maize have been influential here, an alternative pull for labour migration is provided by the coffee plantation of Amboim and Seles, and by the coastal towns of Novo Redondo and Porto Amboim.[26] In the days of the caravan trade Novo Redondo was an important trading centre, more important perhaps than Benguela for the people of this area.

Work is sought by Ovimbundu in lands far from their home. There are Ovimbundu at Brazzaville; others have settled permanently in the Congo Republic, or work in Rhodesia; the Johannesburg mines have employed many, and some have gone as far as Natal.[27] In Epalanga, the village where I lived, there were two men who had been to Johannesburg—nor was this very exceptional and I am told that among the people south of the railway it is quite common.

The world picture of the Ovimbundu is vague, except as regards Angola and the neighbouring countries. The existence of Europe (Putu) composed of different nations Portuguese, French, and English is known, and I was several times asked if there were black people in England. Little or nothing is known of the other continents. The island of S. Tomé in the Atlantic is known, since up to recently Angolan labourers went there, and some convicts are still sent to it. Several people from the neighbourhood had lived in Luanda or worked on coffee plantations in northern Angola. The Belgian Congo was known as Bula Matadi, though people seem little aware of Rhodesia, and Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa) is confused with the southern Angolan port of Moçamedes. The railway lines and the cities along it are of course well known, and some of the people I knew had travelled to Kwanyama country in the far south of Angola to buy cattle. Johannesburg (Zhwaini) and its

[24] Notably in the arm ornaments and hair styles favoured by some women. Cela diviners are often consulted.

[25] Childs (p. 179) suggests that the change came about in the nineteenth century.

[26] For this area of Angola see Egerton, pp. 186–8. Galvão and Selvagem, pp. 378–80, 457–8.

[27] Personal information. Also Childs, p. 213.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

spent 10,000 escudos, he told me, in buying shells to trade in Kwanyama country and even if this be regarded as an exaggeration such an expedition will cost at least several hundred escudos.

464 I have not so far discussed labour migration and its economic consequences. There are three ways of going out to work: being [466] recruited for 'contract labour', which involves selection by the chief and government headmen who send people to the post whence they are directed to wherever they are required; being recruited by labour-recruiters who visit villages with their lorries; and travelling, usually on foot, to find work. Contract labour is for a year, which may be followed by a fortnight's work at the post to which the *contratados* are returned. The coffee plantations of Amboim and Seles are important centres for voluntary labour from Gumba and neighbouring chiefdoms. Women, and boys from ten years up, go to work there for spells which may be only two months. However, even in Gumba whose people have a reputation for backwardness and for lack of enthusiasm for going away to work, there is nothing at all surprising in meeting men who have learnt a few words of English in Johannesburg.

[592] Of the 36 household heads of Epalanga, 9 were women, and 8 were men who for one reason or another (elders, cripples, the catechist) would not leave the village. Of the other 19, 6 were absent as labourers during some part of my stay, and this figure excludes individuals who were not expected home within a year.

[369] In the cities there are large numbers of permanently or semi-permanently urbanized Ovimbundu, who have largely lost contact with their home villages. Some people who have spent years in the towns may come home—in Epalanga there were at least five women who had visited cities.

Although almost all able-bodied men and many women have lived outside the context of village life as servants to Europeans, as labourers on plantations, and as urban workers, it would be [369] a mistake to think of the rural areas of the Benguela Highland, as being labour reservoirs economically dependent on the towns. 435 It seems that prices of manufactured goods are lower near the railway line and in the cities; hence a man returning from wage labour may buy cloths, a bicycle, a sewing-machine, or a